Dr. Bell: Dr. D.H. Bell
Interviewee: Eloise Kellum Reade Farrior
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Pender County Oral History Project

Eloise Kellum Reade Farrior

Mrs. Eloise Kellum Reade Farrior reflects on how her mother and seven hundred other families in Onslow County North Carolina were displaced by the government appropriating land. She shares the various struggles that her mother went through as a single parent, and how her mother overcame those challenges and established herself in Burgaw North Carolina. Lastly, she recounts her father's grocery store, and how her mother honored his legacy by opening a grocery store in Burgaw.

Topics discussed include personal experiences and memories being displaced from Onslow County, how her mother came to Pender County, displacement due to government policies and lack of aid, and success after being displaced.

Dr. D.H. Bell: Elouise Kellum Farrior, who was from Onslow County and came over when the United States government wanted to appropriate land for Camp Lejune. And what date were you born on Eloise?

[00:00:20]

Louise Kellum Farrior: July the 10th, 1922.

[00:00:24]

Dr. Bell: And in Onslow County, right?

[00:00:26]

Farrior: In Onslow County.

[00:00:27]

Dr. Bell: And when the government decided to take all that land, what kind of reaction did most people have?

[00:00:26]

Farrior: They were completely saddened, they were shocked, they were—they—it was unbearable. And most of them had no other recourse, no place to go, and that was their home. They lived there all their life and that was all there was to it.

[00:00:59]

Dr. Bell: Of course, do you remember how many acres the government wanted?

[00:01:04]

Farrior: I don't know, but there were 700 and something families.

[00:01:09]

Dr. Bell: Oh geez, I think it was 10,000. I believe it was 10,000.

[00:01:12]

Farrior: Marlyne Robinson can probably fill you in or—a lot of those things—

[00:01:20]

Dr. Bell: I can ask her to then. So then, did the government offer assistance to the families in moving? Or did they just buy their land and say bye?

[00:01:32]

Farrior: My mother—I'll tell you what my mother told me. She said the worst day of her life, was when she went to the door and this government man—told her that she had 90 days to get out.

[00:01:57]

Dr. Bell: That's all they gave them?

[00:01:58]

Farrior: That the government had confiscated their property, and they had ninety days to get out.

[00:02:04]

Dr. Bell: Well now, they did pay people though, didn't they?

[00:02:09]

Farrior: They paid people, but it was a very paltry sum.

[00:02:14]

Dr. Bell: And ninety days, I didn't remember it was that short a length of time. That weren't much time, was it?

[00:02:23]

Farrior: They didn't think so. If it had not been—my mother was a widow, and if it had not been for the Kobold [?] families that were also looking for a place to go, I don't know what she would have done. Because they asked her to go with them, and as they looked around the countryside, and decided where to go.

[00:02:52]

Dr. Bell: So then, well, that was very good for her. So, then, was she was one, the Kellums, and then the Kobold [?] family, and what other families came that you remember?

[00:03:05]

Farrior: Oh my gracious [?], I don't know.

[00:03:07]

Dr. Bell: Because you were the ones I remember.

[00:03:08]

Farrior: Marlyne's mother and father—

[00:03:14]

Unidentified Speaker 2: The Harrisons.

[00:03:15]

Dr. Bell: The Harrisons, yeah.

[00:03:17]

Farrior: The Harrisons, oh I can't tell you.

[00:03:20]

Dr. Bell: The only one I have remembered was the Colvilles [?], and Elouise's mother.

[00:03:24]

Farrior: Just a minute, I can't tell you.

[00:03:28]

Dr. Bell: Elouise, do you remember how many people were displayed? How many families did you say there were?

[00:03:33]

Farrior: Over-seven-over seven hundred families

[00:03:39]

Dr. Bell: So, I know that the Colvilles [?], for the most part, when they came over, they farmed. Okay, and tell me about Ms. Kellum's—what she did?

[00:03:50]

Farrior: Well, back home, when my he was living, my father had a little grocery and the post office.

[00:04:02]

Dr. Bell: And what was the name of the place?

[00:04:06]

Farrior: The place was Gillet, Gillet, and it got be Gellet [?] You know how that—but it was named after a family of Gillets, and they—and when my father died, he died when I was elven years year old. When he died, my mother took the store and the post office. And that's what she

did, that was her lively hood. Store and the post office. And of course she had to attend to all of that.

[00:04:52]

Dr. Bell: I didn't remember that. I didn't remember that she had done and the post office over there. Now, when she came over here, was there a store there she bought or did she start one.

[00:05:06]

Farrior: Oh, ah, when she came over here—how'd it—God just paves a way, he makes a way for those that don't have a way. Herman Murray had a little grocery store, a little a frame grocery store, up there right where AutoZone is now. And my mother bought that little store from him for $2,500. That was about all they gave us. I don't know exactly what amount we got but weren't much of it after that. But anyway, she bought that little grocery store and then, bought a little more property that was around it. Which is now facing 1-17, and the rest is history. That's—

[00:06:31]

Dr. Bell: And then of course, one thing that helped out any business along there was the bypass. Do you remember what year the bypass was put in?

[00:06:38]

Farrior: Yea, but I don't know when—

[00:06:42]

Dr. Bell: 1950, wasn't it? More or less?

[00:06:43]

Farrior: It probably was somebody else would have to tell you that

[00:06:48]

Dr. Bell: I think it was, probably about 1950. And so, she ran the store.

[00:06:55]

Farrior: She ran the grocery store—

[00:06:57]

Dr. Bell: Now did she have—

[00:06:58]

Farrior: Until 1950—about 1950 my husband—I got married in 1947 and John said—well worked on the railroad and he stayed away from home, more than he stayed at home. Well, I didn't like that much, and I talked him into taking over the store and letting Momma retire. And that's the way that went.

[00:07:35]

Dr. Bell: Now when Mrs. Kellum had the store, she didn't have gas pumps or meats or anything in the grocery store? She just had the grocery?

[00:07:44]

Farrior: No, she just had a grocery store.

[00:07:46]

Dr. Bell: So, John Jr added a meat market and—hamburger

[00:07:51]

Farrior: That didn't have all that. She just had a little grocery store, a little corner grocery.

[00:07:59]

Dr. Bell: Yeah, a little corner grocery store.

[00:08:02]

Farrior: And of course, it was just perfect for her because she was moving into one—out of one little grocery into another one.

[00:08:12]

Dr. Bell: Now that's good. Now did I have living quarters there or did miss Kellum build those.

[00:08:16]

Farrior: It had an apartment built next door to it, adjoined to it.

[00:08:25]

Dr. Bell: Fell right into it. Okay good.